



**Frederick County
Government
Frederick, Maryland**

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 17, 2009

COMMISSIONERS REVIEW REPORT ON ANIMAL CONTROL SHELTER BY CORNELL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

FREDERICK, MD – The Frederick Board of County Commissioners today reviewed a report and evaluation of the county's Animal Control Division shelter as conducted by the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine from September 3 - 5, 2008. The report highlighted the strengths of the shelter and provided suggestions for improvements, many of which were implemented immediately after the evaluation and others will be included in daily procedures related to the physical and behavioral health of the animals and shelter environment.

The team from Cornell observed daily shelter operations during the evaluation timeframe. They reviewed all aspects of animal movement and staff care, treatment, vaccinations and medications administered to the animals. The veterinarians also provided a debriefing of their findings.

According to Dr. Brenda Griffin, director of Clinical Programs in Shelter Medicine at Cornell, "The Frederick County shelter is to be commended for opening its doors to us during this consultation process. Our service is critical in nature, as we aim to discover any practices where improvements in animal care can be made. Many shelters are afraid of such a process. The fact the shelter provided transparent access to their facility, operating procedures and statistics speaks volumes to their desire to optimize their shelter's potential for the animals and citizens of Frederick County."

(more)

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According to the report, one of the most difficult problems the shelter faces is one that is all too common in shelters throughout the United States -- the high numbers of cats and kittens entering the shelter. According to Dr. Stephanie Janeczko, senior resident in Shelter Medicine and member of the evaluation team, “The live release rate for cats at the shelter is only approximately 30 percent. Overcrowding of cats in the shelter makes control of upper respiratory infection difficult and contributes to both animal and staff stress.”

Animal Control Division Director Harold Domer responded, “A priority for our shelter will be to hire a part-time veterinarian to implement Cornell’s recommendations that will help our management team and volunteers implement strategies designed to improve the shelter’s life-saving potential for cats, as well as to improve the overall animal welfare and population management at our shelter.” He added, “We are grateful for the professionalism and openness displayed by the Cornell veterinary team during their evaluation. Their invaluable medical direction on a wide range of issues will help us continue to improve our goals to make our shelter ‘healthy and happy’ for animals in our care.”

Dr. Griffin of Cornell also emphasized that the key to making progress at the shelter is continued strong collaboration between shelter leadership, staff, volunteers, members of the Companion Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (CAWAC), humane groups in the community and private citizens of Frederick County. She said that Cornell veterinarians will continue to be available to help the shelter over the coming months.

The evaluation was originally requested by CAWAC and approved by the Board of County Commissioners in June 2008. Now that the report is complete, the Commissioners requested periodic updates on progress by the shelter in addressing the issues noted in the evaluation.

An electronic copy of the evaluation titled, “Final Report: Shelter Consultation for Animal Control Division, Frederick County, MD,” dated January 5, 2009, by Maddie’s Shelter Medicine Program, College of Veterinary Medicine, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, is available at www.co.frederick.md.us/agenda (*see the February 17 County Commissioner agenda and link to the report*).

For further information on the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, call 607-253-3000 or visit www.vet.cornell.edu.

Call 301-600-1546 or visit www.co.frederick.md.us/animalcontrol for additional information on the Frederick County Animal Control Division, adoption of animals, vaccinations, the spay/neutering clinic, licensing and other related subjects.

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